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ABSTRACT

This report describes a study which examined the relation of Chinese parenting style to only-children's academic achievement. Subjects, 186 middle-class parents of fifth and sixth graders (10-13 years old) from one Beijing elementary school, completed a Chinese translation of the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ). Four approximately equal groups were identified: (1) fathers of only sons; (2) fathers of only daughters; (3) mothers of only sons; (4) mothers of only daughters. Information was collected on whether parents assigned extra homework to their children, how much time children spent on homework each day, and parents' expectations for their child's future middle school selection. Demographic information was collected on children's gender, age, grade, most recent exam grades (Chinese and Math), mother's and father's ages and educational levels. Students' achievement level was defined by the average grade from Chinese and Math. Factor analysis of the PAQ yielded three factors interpreted as authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles. Results indicated that parents perceived themselves as tending toward authoritative parenting, with no influence of parent or child gender. There was no relationship between parenting style or parents' educational level and school achievement. Over 40 percent of parents gave their children extra homework and almost 90 percent expected them to attend key middle schools, which would guarantee university admission. Regression analyses indicated that the higher the parents' expectations of their children's middle school selection, the better the child's academic achievement. Parents of children with low achievement assigned extra homework more often than parents of children with high achievement. (Contains 4 tables and 50 references.) (KDFB)

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Running head: PARENTING STYLE AND ONLY CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENT

Parenting Style and Only Children's School Achievement in China

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It is generally recognized that Chinese parents pay a great deal of attention to the achievement of their children, and are highly concerned with the control and discipline of their children (Chao, 1994; Ho, 1989). Recent studies, however, of Chinese only children indicated that they are spoiled (Feng, 1990; Zhu, 1987); and at the same time, parents are criticized for pushing their only children too hard in school achievement (Guan, 1994; Stevenson, Lee & Chen, 1994).

Since China opened to the outside world in the late 1970s, rapid changes in sociopolitical and economic conditions have occurred in China. Along with the acceptance of the Government's "One Child Policy" and the improvement of the living standard, family structure, parents' beliefs and their values are also changing. There is evidence of departure from Chinese traditional childrearing and parenting (Guan, 1994; Kelley & Tseng, 1992; Meng, 1994). In comparing parents of only children in the 1990s with those of the 1950s and 1960s, Guan (1994) found that 70.5% of parents of only children today reported themselves to pay the greatest attention to their child's academic achievement, while only 36.9% of parents of 1950s and 1960s did so. Formerly, when parents made a mistake, eighty percent of the parents expected their children to obey, but now only 13.9% of parents want their only children to follow their order anyway. Ho (1989) concluded that Chinese parents seem to have become more Westernized.

Parents' beliefs and values play very important roles in their child rearing style and children's outcomes. Research has demonstrated that parental support, involvement and interest in the child have positive relationships with the child's self-esteem (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). An authoritative parenting characteristic is positively associated with

children's academic achievement. Thus, this study is designed to explore Chinese parenting style, as well as its relationship with only children's academic achievement.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Research on parenting style in Western cultures has consistently shown that the parent-child relationship is a central factor in children's growth and learning. An extensive literature has suggested that parenting styles directly relate to children's school achievement (Dornbush, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987; Paulson, 1994; Steinberg, Dornbush & Brown, 1992). Based on these studies of Western cultures, it is believed that an authoritative parenting style is positively related to children's school achievement, while authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have negative impact on children's achievement (Steinberg, Elmen & Mounts, 1989; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbush & Darling, 1992). Nevertheless, contradicting studies of parenting styles in Western culture have shown that Chinese children are more successful in their school performance than children from other ethnic groups, but that their parents are rather more authoritarian (Dornbush et al, 1987; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbush & Darling, 1992). Regardless, there are few studies on Chinese parenting style, and its relations with their children's achievement in Chinese culture.

When cross-cultural comparisons are made, dramatic differences have been found between Chinese parents and their Americans counterparts (Ho, 1991). Nevertheless, there is a limited research base on Chinese parenting style, while Americans have been intensively studied.

Recently, there has been increasing interest in studying parents' behavior in relation

to a variety of outcomes in the West, such as perceived self-competence, moral development and aggression (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). However, the great majority of studies of parenting are studies of mothers' behavior only while the aspects of fathers' behavior and their relationships to the mothers' behavior are ignored.

For decades, there has been a gap in the study of Chinese socialization especially in family relations and child development. Recently, researchers have paid more attention to studying behaviors of only children versus children with siblings; but up to the present, there exists no research on the relationship between Chinese parenting style and only children's achievement. In view of this, it is of great significance to study this relation in the Chinese society, and is the primary concern in this study.

Statement of Purpose

This study utilized Baumrind's typology of parenting styles to investigate the relationship between parenting style and only children's academic achievement in Chinese society. Parenting styles of both mothers and fathers are examined in relation to the gender of their only children, and their school achievement.

The following questions will be answered: (1) What are the parenting styles of parents of only children in China? (2) What expectations do parents have for their only children? (3) Does assigning extra homework over and above that required by the teacher affect students' achievement? (4) Do parenting styles differ for fathers and mothers of male and female children? (5) How is parenting style related to children's achievement? and (6) What is the relationship between parents' educational level and their only children's achievement?

Literature Review

Cultural institutions, such as a family, have an impact on children's mental development and school achievement (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). In Western culture, it is believed that authoritative parenting provides a positive relation to children's school performance; while authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have negative influences on children's performance. Current research has begun to pay attention to cross-cultural studies on parenting style in relation to children's achievement. Studies of Chinese parenting often describe the parents as being very strict and controlling. Several studies have suggested that Chinese students in the United States achieved better school success than other ethnic groups (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). A gap in an understanding still remains: what is the relationship between Chinese parenting style and children's school achievement? In the following, we will first review literature on the concept of achievement in Chinese culture, Chinese child rearing practices, and research on parenting style in relation to adolescents' achievement.

Achievement in Chinese Culture

Educational achievement is highly prized in Chinese culture. Achievement goals are often presented as being for the benefit of family, parents and/or the state, rather than the individual (Bond, 1991). In China, academic achievement is a major escalator to higher positions. Parents believe that education is the most important factor for children's overall future success.

Today, childhood achievement is almost exclusively defined in academic terms. Social

skills, athletic ability, or personal fulfillment are secondary to doing well in school (Bond, 1991). According to Guan's report (1994) on "Comparison of family education of only children in the 90s' and family education of children in the 50s'-60s'", more than 70% of parents of only children said their greatest concern was their child's school performance; forty percent for children's health; thirty-four percent for children's food and clothing; and only 13.1% for children's ideological education. Chinese schools provide an environment which gives children a sense of purpose, accomplishment, and pleasure as they work hard and strive to achieve in their schoolwork (Stevenson & Lee, 1990).

However, the current Chinese government policy (Stevenson, Lee, & Chen, 1994) on education -- improving the quality of education and the condition of schools at primary and secondary education, while limiting opportunities for advanced education -- produces even more intense competition among this generation of Chinese only children. Recent studies indicated that educational attainment of only children has become a top priority for young parents who now devote more attention to their child's talent training and schooling (Guan, 1994; Meng, 1992). It is very common for homework to be supervised and to extend for long periods, extracurricular activities be kept to a minimum, effort is rewarded, to hire tutors, and to confine socializing to family outings (Bond, 1991). About 66% of the students said that they attended courses of English and other required main subjects (e.g. Math and Chinese) after school (Guan, 1994).

Due to the high value that Chinese parents have placed on education, coupled with the intense competition for the limited number of places in higher education, parents exert massive pressure on their children's success in academics at the cost of giving too little

attention to other facets of their children's development (Stevenson & Chen, 1994). Parents are criticized for pushing their children too hard in schooling. A recent study in Beijing showed (Guan, 1994) that seventy-eight percent of the students said they needed more time for sleep and play; seventy percent of the students complained that their parents always pushed them to study and did not allow them to play.

Another very important reason that parents put high pressure on their children's achievement is that parents of only children today are the victims of the Chinese Cultural Revolution during 1966-1976. Many of them regret not having been able to get enough education when they were young to realize their achievement goals. These parents expect to see the success of their children (Bao, 1994). According to a recent study (Yu, Song, Lin, & Qi, 1994), about 83% of parents reported that they provided different ways to help their children study. In general, more parents engaged in agriculture provided help for their children's schooling than parents engaged in non-agriculture.

Since 1982, "a private school craze" has emerged in China. According to People's Daily (1/29/1994), there have been more than 1,200 private schools (beyond the primary school) nationwide. Parents who want their only children to get the limited advanced education available, are worried about their children's schooling and future careers. Many parents, regardless of their own educational levels, would spend much more money to send the only children to a better school for better education. When asked about parents expectations for their children's future schooling, the overwhelming majority of the parents expected their children to go to college or beyond. (Guan, 1994; Yu, Song, Lin, & Qi, 1994). It is the common perception that students' academic achievement is the primary goal for

both parents and their only children (People's Daily -- Overseas; 11/15/1993).

There have been a number of cross-cultural studies comparing Chinese-American and European-American parental involvement. Chinese parents were found to value education very strongly, have high expectations and performance standards for schooling, and believe in the importance of hard work and effort (Yao, 1985; Campbell & Mandel, 1990; Pang, 1991).

Chinese Child Rearing Practices

Chinese parents regard child rearing as one of the fundamental issues in their lives (Xie & Hultgren, 1994). In Chinese culture, one of the main Confucian concepts of childrearing is that " Bearing a child without training is the failure of his father." That means parents (in the past, the father was the master of the family) take complete responsibility for their children's failures. The achievements of their children, however, represents a symbol of social achievement for the parents and the family.

There is considerable agreement among observers on attitudes about child rearing -- early leniency versus later harshness. Parents tend to be highly lenient or even indulgent in their attitudes toward the infant and young child, in contrast to the strict discipline they impose on older children (Ho, 1989; Stevenson, Chen, & Lee, 1992). When the child reaches school age -- passing into a new period of life, Chinese parents' attitudes toward the child change from indulgence to strict discipline (Ho, 1991; Chan, 1986). The child is considered to be capable of 'understanding things', and therefore should be held responsible for his or her wrongdoing, or failure to meet expectations (Ekblad, 1990).

Studies have also noted that Chinese culture places emphasis on obedience, filial

piety, mutual dependence, group identification, and self-discipline in contrast to the lack of emphasis placed on independence, assertiveness, and creativity (Bond, 1986; 1991; Kelley & Tseng, 1992). Current research indicates that some of the parental child rearing styles show a great departure from the traditional pattern. The high degrees of authoritarianism and absolute obedience observed in the younger generation is no longer valued the same as before. (Chuang, 1981; Ho & Kang, 1984; Yu, Song, Lin, & Qi, 1994). However, filial piety has broader meaning in Chinese culture. Children are expected to satisfy their parents, show respect and reverence for elders (Kelley, & Tseng, 1992). In addition, they should actively do a good job to honor for their parents so that their parents will win respect from others (Yue, 1994).

The essential Chinese child rearing style among contemporary Chinese remains highly discernible (Ho & Kang, 1984). On one hand, only children are reported to be spoiled by their parents and grandparents (Bao, 1994; Chen, 1985; Wang, 1991; Wu, 1983), and at the same time, parents are criticized for pushing their only children too hard for academic achievement (Guan, 1994; Stevenson, Lee & Chen, 1994). Many parents today, still view their children as their own property. They control or strongly guide their children's daily life, marriage, education, and future occupation (Stevenson, Chen, & Lee, 1992). Recent research (Guan, 1994) pointed out that some parents force their children to learn things such as piano, out of their own wishes rather than the interest of their children. However, many parents believe all they do is for the good of their children.

A child's characteristics are an important contributor to achievement. Chinese believe that the secret of academic success lies in having devoted teachers and supportive parents

but most importantly in the hard work of the students themselves. The skills of parenting are to foster children to develop strong intrinsic motivation toward learning and achievement (Stevenson & Chen, 1994).

The preference for male children is another historically outstanding feature of the traditional Chinese culture (Ho, 1989). Many Chinese parents, especially parents in the countryside, continue to exhibit a preference for boys over girls, as boys are responsible for carrying on the family heritage. However, this attitude is not as significantly profound in the city. a recent study in China showed that a majority of the parents of only children did not have a preference of their only children's gender (Feng, & Chen, 1994; Meng, 1994; Yu, Song, Lin, & Qi, 1994). According to Wang (1994), more women than men in Beijing prefer daughters to sons.

In the child rearing practices, the literature also suggests that fathers are more controlling of their sons than are mothers. Both parents are more responsive to sons, compared to their daughters, and are more concerned with their son's achievement. Fathers tend to be more concerned with their sons' performance than are mothers (Block, 1983). A recent study on Chinese parents' perceptions of their strengths and needs in rearing only children by Xie and Hultgren (1994) indicated that Chinese fathers had higher expectations for their only sons than their only daughters in talent training and schooling. Fathers reported being more involved in helping daughters than sons, while mothers reported being more involved in helping sons than daughters in home teaching area.

Traditionally, the father has been perceived to be more controlling and less emotionally involved than mothers. Research in Western societies has also confirmed this

assumption (Berndt, Cheung, Hau, & Lew, 1993). Contemporary Chinese mothers appear to be assuming a more important role as disciplinarians (Ho, 1986). However, there are no studies of parenting style comparisons between mother and father in relation to children's school achievement.

Research on parenting style in relation to students' achievement

Since Baumrind defined the three family parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) and the consequences for the development of cognitive and social competence in 1971, researchers in the West have begun to pay more attention to the relations between parenting practices and students' school achievement.

According to Baumrind's definition, authoritative parents are demanding and accepting; authoritarian parents are demanding and rejecting; and permissive parents are permissive and rejecting. In the study of child rearing, parenting style plays a very important role in children's outcomes (McGillicuddy-De Lisi; 1985). Educational achievement of individuals are directly related to the social class of parents (Sue and Okazaki (1990). The literature suggested that adolescents' academic competence is higher among youngsters raised in authoritative homes where parents are responsive and demanding than in other family environments (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh; 1987). Paulson (1994) further indicated that high levels of both control and affect were more conducive to positive achievement outcome than were other parenting characteristics. This is because parental authoritativeness contributes to the child's psychosocial development, which in turn facilitates his or her school success (Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989). Recently, it has been suggested that three specific components of authoritativeness contribute to healthy

psychological development and school success during adolescents: parental acceptance or warmth, behavioral supervision and strictness, and psychological autonomy granting or democracy (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992).

Which parenting style predicts children's academic success among the Chinese? Only in recent years have researchers begun examining parenting styles in relation to adolescents' achievement among the different ethnic groups in the United States (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown; 1992). However, these results were not clear.

Dornbusch and his colleagues (1987) found that within the Asian group, authoritarian parenting was the strongest positive predictor of grades; but the other parenting indices were not significantly related to students' performance. However, this result was not consistent with the study by Lamborn et al. (1991) which indicated that authoritative parenting had a positive influence on the Asian adolescents' achievement. Another study (Bond, 1991) by Dornbusch in California high schools had produced an ironic finding: Chinese students who were more successful came from families reporting less authoritarian patterns of rearing their children. This negative relationship between grades and authoritarianism was also found within the other ethnic groups samples.

The irony lies in the fact that as a group the Chinese Americans do better at school than White Americans but their parents are more authoritarian in their childrearing practices than are White American parents. As Dornbusch himself concluded that his group has 'more questions than answers in examining Asian parenting practices and school performance' (Bond, 1991; pp. 18).

Chao (1994) in her recent study described the paradox that 'the concepts of

authoritative and authoritarian are somewhat ethnocentric and do not capture the important features of Chinese child rearing, especially for explaining their school success'(pp. 1111). She believed that Chinese have important pronounced differences from European-Americans on the concept of parenting, and this concept comes from a sociocultural context that Chinese do not necessarily share. So scoring high on measures of 'authoritarian' could not have the same meaning for Chinese as for European-Americans who have experienced different social and cultural contexts.

A few studies on the relations between Chinese parenting style and children's achievement were conducted in Hong Kong, and Taiwan, but none in mainland China. Again most of these results vary. According to Lau and Leung (1992), a good relationship with parents is associated most noticeably with higher self-esteem in Chinese adolescents. In contrast, children who relate poorly to their parents show more maladjustment and delinquent development.

A study (Li, 1974) in Hong Kong indicated that achievement motivation in boys was related to low parental dominance and harshness; while girls' high achievement motivation was related to low parental communication, comradeship, and sharing. However, the findings (Huang, 1976) in Taiwan did not agree with that. For both boys and girls, rejecting and inconsistent parental attitudes tended to be associated with low achievement motivation and poor learning attitudes; and placing expectations on children tended to enhance their achievement motivation.

According to Chan's study (1981b) in Hong Kong, adolescents (both boys and girls) with higher intellectual abilities tended to have fathers who were more concerned and less

restrictive, and mothers who were less restrictive but more authoritarian.

An investigation on parent-child relations and the cognitive abilities of children in Taiwan (Chu, 1975) showed that positive parental attitudes (protecting, loving, rewarding, and being casual), significantly correlated with both verbal and non-verbal aspects of convergent and divergent thinking abilities for girls, but not for boys. Significant negative correlation were obtained between negative parental attitudes (rejecting, demanding, neglecting, and punishing) and these abilities; these negative correlations were more often found between opposite-sex parents and children than between same-sex parents and children.

Confronted by the limited and conflicting reports reviewed above, it is hard to discern an unequivocal pattern of relations between Chinese parental attitudes/style and children's academic achievement. In general, positive parental attitudes promote children's cognitive abilities, and negative parental attitudes retard them. But even this generalization has not been uniformly confirmed by the data.

Furthermore, there are undeniable variations in socialization between Chinese in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and overseas, and these represent divergent departures from the traditional pattern. These variations, Ho (1986) described, stem from radical differences in the politico-cultural context in which Chinese find themselves -- particularly in ideological objectives and in conceptions of what constitutes the desired end-product of the socialization process.

Summary

The family is a major socialization institution. Research on the influence of parenting

style in Western societies has consistently shown that the parent-child relation is a central factor in children's social development. It is believed that authoritative parenting provides positive relations to the children's school performance; while authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have negative impact on children's performance. However, this concept/result does not apply to the Chinese parenting style and children's school achievement. Several studies have concluded that Chinese Americans were the highest on the authoritarian style and their children had the highest achievement. This study, then, attempted to determine the relations between Chinese parenting style and their only children's academic achievement in China.

Methodology

This study examines parenting styles of Chinese parents and the relations of these styles to the achievement of their preadolescent only children. The following questions will be considered: What are the characteristics of Chinese parenting style? How are these parenting styles associated with only children's achievement based on gender of parents and gender of only children? What are the parents' expectations for their children's schooling? Does assigning homework by parents over and above those assigned by schools influence children's achievement? Does parents' education level effect only children's schooling?

Subjects

The data for this study was collected in a Beijing elementary school located in the

Western suburb of the city. Everyone of the two hundred and eighteen parents of students in the 5th and 6th grades (10-13 years old) were invited to participate in the study. The students considered in both grades are in the key years of primary schools. Both parents and their only children are expected to know well the importance of the children's performance with respect to better future choice of middle schools, universities, and final career. All the students in this study are only sons and only daughters from typical Chinese middle class families -- workers, carders, army officers, and professionals.

Measures

The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Buri (1991) was used to identify Baumrind's three styles of parenting (authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative) among Chinese parents. The instrument was made up of thirty items intended for both parents, with ten items each reflecting one of the three styles. All response options were based on a five-point scale assessing the parents' perceptions of their own parenting style, with alternatives including (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The reported internal consistency reliabilities ranged from .74 to .85, and test-retest reliabilities ranged from .77 to .92 for the different scales. Meanwhile, demographic information was also collected regarding the children' gender, age, grade, most recent examinations grades (Chinese and Math), their mother/father's ages, as well as mother/father's education levels. Other information collected included whether the parents assign extra homework to their children (on top of the homework from school), and how much time the child spends on homework everyday. Parents' expectations for their children's future middle school selection were also gathered.

Records of school achievement from the most recent semester's examinations were used as indicators of the students' achievement. An average grade was computed from the grades reported on two core courses (Chinese and Mathematics). These averaged scores were used as the achievement scores in the present study.

Procedure

The main instrument and the demographic questions were first translated by one of the authors from English into Chinese. It was later translated back from Chinese into English by another expert for check of congruency. At the end of February 1995, two complete copies of the instrument together with a cover letter in Chinese were sent to a conductor teacher in Beijing. The letter to the conductor described the purpose of the study, selection of subjects, procedure for completing the questionnaires, and the time to return them back by air-mail to the researcher in the U. S.

The data collection part of this study was administered by the conductor in the participating school. Upon receipt of the materials, the conductor contacted the school principal, and the school prepared a formal letter to the students' parents in Chinese. This letter explained the general purpose of the study as well as instructions for completion. Out of the two hundred and eighteen questionnaires, half of them were randomly assigned to have the mothers to fill them out, while the other half were filled out by the fathers. The cover letter together with the questionnaires were taken home for completion and brought back by the students within a week's time. As a result, one hundred and eighty-six completed forms (85.32%) were returned and used for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of Chinese parenting style in relation to their only children's school achievement. Various inferential statistics were used to seek answers to the questions raised in this study. First of all, a factor analysis was used to study the underlying structure of the instrument that was designed to study various parenting styles. T-tests were performed to identify parents' expectations for their only children's middle school selection (key schools versus non-key schools), to examine whether the students' achievement significantly related to extra homework assigned by parents, and to explore the relationship between parents' educational level and children's schooling. A 2 (gender of only children) x 2 (gender of parents) analysis of variance was utilized to examine the effect of the three parenting styles in terms of gender of children and gender of parents. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to study the relationship among these three parenting styles and only children's school achievement by each of the parents and only children's gender combination. Furthermore, multiple regression was used to predict children's success.

Results

The sample consisted of 186 parents of only children in the fifth and sixth grades. Four groups were identified: father of only son (n=50); father of only daughter (n=40); mother of only son (n=41); and mother of only daughter (n=55). A majority (71.51%) of the parents with only children were under 40 years old. The mean age for the sample was 38.4, with a standard deviation of 2.55. More than one third of the parents (35%) had some college or higher education. Two thirds of the parents (63.5%) had obtained a middle or

high school education, and 1.5% had only completed primary school.

Factorial Validity

A factor analysis by means of principal axis extraction was performed through SAS on the thirty items. The result was then subjected to promax rotation in an attempt to achieve simple structure, since it was anticipated that the parenting styles were probably correlated to each other. Based on the Cattell's "scree" plot (Hatcher, 1994) as well as the interpretability of the factors, it was decided that three factors should be extracted. The first factor alone accounts for 35.36% of the common variance, the second factor for 20.17%, and the third for 16.53%. A total of 72.06% of the variance was being accounted for by the three factors retained.

The rotated factor pattern for the questionnaire was presented in Table 1, where only loadings bigger than 0.30 were reported. Item means and standard deviations were also included. Basically, three distinct factors emerged with items loading on their designated factors. More specifically, all ten items in authoritarian style loaded highly on factor 1, and with near-zero loadings on the other two factors. Nine out of the ten authoritative style items loaded quite highly on factor 2. Only item 6 (I take the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but I would not decide for something simply because my child wants it) had relatively lower loading (.14) on factor 2, but it also had low loadings on the other two factors. It could mean that this item needs to be more specific for respondents from the Chinese culture. As for the permissive style items, seven items out of ten loaded moderately high on factor 3 and with virtually no cross-loadings. One of the items (I allow my child to form his/her own point of view on family matters, and I generally allow him/her

to decide for himself/herself what he/she is going to do) had relatively higher loadings on factor 2 authoritative style (.27) rather than on factor 3. It could indicate that this item is more representative of an authoritative parenting style than a permissive style according to Chinese culture. Two other items (Items 3: I do not feel that my child needs to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority has established them; and item 7: I allow my child to decide most things for himself/herself without a lot of direction from me) had not only low loadings (less than .30) on factor 3 but near-zero loadings on the other factors. Again, these two items might need to be restructured for Chinese parents, especially with respect to its negative wordings. In view of all these observations, the factors were interpreted, respectively, as authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting style. Their inter-factor correlations were low, however, ranging from .01 to -.23.

Reliability

To examine the internal consistency of the instrument when administered to Chinese parents, Cronbach's alpha was computed for each set of items that correspond to each parenting style. The results indicated that the Cronbach's alpha was 0.66 for the items on authoritative style, 0.75 for the items on authoritarian style, and 0.56 for the items on permissive style, and 0.63 for the whole instrument.

Characteristics of Parenting Style

In view of the acceptable factor solution discussed above, the average of each parent's response to the ten items designated for each of the respective parenting styles were used as the parent's scale scores in subsequent statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics reflected that the Chinese parents in this study perceived themselves as more inclined towards the

authoritative style. Table 2 summarized the means and standard deviations of the three parenting styles. A 2 x 2 ANOVA design (the 2 genders of only children by the 2 genders of parents) was used to examine whether the combination of the parents's genders with those of the only children had influence on each of the three parenting styles. None of these tests resulted in significance. The corresponding F statistics were $F(3,182)=2.05$, $p<.11$; $F(3,182)=1.0$, $p<.40$; and $F(3,182)=.45$, $p<.72$ for the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive scales respectively. In another words, the four distinct parents' and only children's gender combination did not differ significantly regarding the three parenting styles. Further correlation analysis was performed on the linear relationship between parenting styles and children's achievement by each of the parents' and only children's gender combination. The correlation results were reported in Table 3, and shows that none of the correlation coefficients were significant.

About 44% of the parents indicated that they gave their children extra homework everyday (besides the homework from school). Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of parents (88.2%) expected their only children to attend key middle schools upon completion of elementary education.

A multiple regression analysis was performed through SAS to predict only children's school achievement by such predictors as parent's gender, student's gender, parent education, whether parent assign homework, whether parent had key middle school expectation of children, and the three parenting styles. The result was provided in Table 4, where the unstandardized regression coefficients (b), the standardized regression coefficients (ß), the squared semipartial correlations (sr^2) , the multiple R, R-square and the adjusted

R-square were reported. Routine diagnostic analysis on the existence of any collinearity among the predictors as well as outliers were performed. Based on the variance inflation factor, condition number, as well as other relevant information from SAS, it was concluded that there was no collinearity among the predictors. In addition, there were no influential observations or outliers in the data as evidenced by the Cook's distance, covariance ratio, as well as other residual analysis information.

The overall model was significant with $F(8,177)=8.18$, $p<.0001$. Only two of the regression coefficients, corresponding to that of the parent assigning homework and the parent expectation of key middle school selection variables, were found to be, in a statistical sense, significantly different from zero. Furthermore, the parent expectation of their children's middle school selection variable had a squared semi-partial correlation of .18, meaning that 18% of the variance of school achievement could be uniquely explained by this variable. Moreover, its sign was positive, indicating that the higher the expectation the parents had, the better their only children performed in school academically. On the other hand, the parent assigning homework variable had a squared semi-partial correlation equal to .06. The sign of the corresponding regression weight was negative, indicating that if parents assigned extra homework, the lower the performance of their children would be in school.

Conclusions and Discussions

This study was designed to examine the evidence of Baumrind's typology of parenting styles applied to Chinese society with the relations between parenting style and only

children's academic achievement. The following conclusions were drown from this study:

(1) Chinese parents of only children perceived themselves as more inclined towards authoritative style;

(2) There was no significant relationship between Chinese only children's school achievement and the three parenting styles based on Baumrind's categories;

(3) There was no difference in these parenting styles under different parents' and children's gender combination;

(4) Parents' educational level did not have an impact on only children's achievement;

(5) Chinese parents' high expectations is a strong predictor and has a positive influence on Children's school achievement; and

(6) Traditionally, Chinese parents believe that hardwork makes a difference in school. Parents of only children with low grades significantly assigned extra homework to their children more often than parents of only children with high grades.

Based on factor analysis results, three distinguishable factors were identified and could be interpreted in accordance to the originally designated authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles. Chinese parents are described as being authoritarian, and strict disciplinarians of their children (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Ekblad, 1986; Ho, 1989). Nevertheless, the parents in this study perceive themselves as more authoritative, not authoritarian in contradiction of previous findings.

Regardless of rapid cultural changes, parents appear to continue to hold high expectations for their children's academic achievement by believing their children will be able to attend a key middle school, attendance at which is perceived to guarantee acceptance

at a university. It is known that high expectation is a strong and positive predictor in children's school achievement in the West. This study also provided information on this positive relationship between Chinese parents' high expectation and their only children's school performance.

Chinese parents of only children also appear to exert pressure on their children for achievement by assigning additional homework. Almost 44% of the students in this study spent an average of 51.9 minutes on math and Chinese assignments given by their parents everyday (in addition to the homework from the school). The lower the test scores children had, the more homework they were given by the parents. This may be due to the fact that parents assigned extra homework because their children did not perform well in school to begin with. Parents value and believe greater efforts can make a difference in their children's school success. However, the reverse can also be possible. It may be that extra homework took away time for children to study for school work. Anyway, the reason why parent assigned extra homework and its relationship to school performance deserves more attention in a future study.

There was no significant difference in perceptions of fathers and mothers of their parenting style regardless of the gender of their only children as revealed by the ANOVA results. It may be that these findings suggest equality of genders in Chinese urban families today. Moreover, there are a couple of studies which show that parents of only children in cities do not have a gender preference for their only children.

There were few significant results in relation to Chinese parenting style and their only children's school achievement in this study. The instrumentation may be one of the causes.

An instrument developed in one culture may not be appropriate in another culture. According to Chao (1994), Baumrind's conceptualizations of parenting style are specific only to European-American individuals, and they may not automatically be transferred to the Chinese culture. The concepts and constructs of parenting style categorized by Baumrind in relation to only children's school achievement in China, did not reflect the true characteristics of Chinese parents of only children. One of the items, for instance, stated "I allow my children to decide most things for themselves without a lot of direction from me". Many studies have indicated that Chinese parents exert control and have high expectations in their children's daily life. They direct or strongly guide their children's schooling, occupation and future career. At the same time, parents are reported to spoil their only children in material prerequisites. The feature of Chinese parenting in only children's families are cultural and social specific. In addition, the definition of these three parenting styles may not have the same meaning for Chinese parents as for their American counterparts. Chao (1994) argued that the parenting dimensions instrument, developed in a Western culture is ethnocentric, and as such, did not capture the important features of Chinese child rearing practices, especially those related to children's academic achievement.

The other limitation of this study is the measure of children's school achievement which was based on grades on examinations in one semester only. Hence, the results may not well represent the children's academic performance as a whole. Furthermore, this study was limited in the sense that parents may have provided socially acceptable answers instead of true opinions, given that they were asked to complete the questionnaires and return them to school teachers. Finally, the results of parenting style was based on parents' self-report

on their child rearing practices and attitudes, not on reports from both parents and their only children, which may or may not reflect their true behavior.

It is well documented that education achievement is highly prized in Chinese culture. Chinese parents may exercise different childrearing practices, and their education levels may vary, but parents' beliefs and values towards children's school achievement may be very similar. In addition, children's school achievement represents the major area of assessment of success of parents' childrearing practices, and which fulfills their social satisfaction, brings honor to their families and ancestors. Cultural value on education, parents' expectations and involvement in children's schooling may be the major factors on Chinese children's achievement rather than parenting style as categorized by Western society. Due to the cultural emphasis on educational achievement, plus the increasingly intense competition to obtain a good education, parents' high expectations, their great involvement and heavy pressure on their children's academic success will continue to be the most important features in the only children's families.

TABLE 1

Factor Pattern From Promax Rotation

Authoritarianism	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	M	SD
Forcing child to conform	.54			3.05	1.15
Expecting child to do things soon	.58			3.00	1.15
Do not allow child to question	.55			2.17	.87
Forcing child to behave right	.43			2.25	1.04
Recognizing boss in family	.42			2.70	1.08
Getting upset when child disagree	.40			2.68	.97
Punish child if not satisfy	.52			2.52	1.09
Parents should strict and forcible	.31			3.26	1.13
Tell child what to do	.43			3.78	.77
If no obey then out of respect	.40			2.67	.99
Authoritativeness					
Discussing reasons with child		.42		3.47	.85
Encouraging verbal give and take		.42		3.81	.77
Directing child activities and decision		.41		4.01	.76
Feeling free to discuss expectations		.36		3.72	.85
Giving child direction and guidance		.49		4.08	.68
Taking child opinions for consideration		.14		3.74	.93
Willing to adjust standards		.31		3.57	.96
Willing to listen to child		.47		3.88	.77
Understanding child's disagreement		.41		3.81	.64
Admitting if making mistakes		.45		4.12	.70
Permissiveness					
Child has own way in family			.41	3.56	.94
Child is free to do things			.52	3.33	.96

(be continued)

Permissiveness	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	M	SD
Child does not need to obey rules			.23	2.94	1.04
No expectations for child behavior			.39	1.92	.79
I do what the child wants			.31	2.70	1.05
No restriction on child activity			.51	2.01	.88
Allow child to decide most things			.22	3.07	.97
No responsible for child behavior			.45	1.65	.85
Child decides what to do on family matters			.06	3.81	.73
Do not direct child behavior activities and desires			.33	2.02	.73

Note: Only loading ≥ .30 are reported. The loadings underlined are smaller than .30 but included for completeness.

TABLE 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Parenting Style

	Authoritativeness	Authoritarianism	Permissiveness
Father (90)	3.80 (.45)	2.85 (.59)	2.68 (.40)
of only son (50)	3.73 (.53)	2.85 (.60)	2.69 (.45)
of only daughter (40)	3.89 (.32)	2.86 (.60)	2.67 (.34)
Mother (96)	3.89 (.32)	2.74 (.52)	2.68 (.38)
of only son (41)	3.89 (.25)	2.80 (.51)	2.73 (.39)
of only daughter (55)	3.89 (.36)	2.67 (.52)	2.64 (.37)
Total (186)	3.85 (.39)	2.79 (.56)	2.68 (.39)

TABLE 3

Correlations of Parenting Styles, Children's Achievement
by Genders of Parents and Only Children

	Authoritativeness/ Achievement	Authoritarianism/ Achievement	Permissiveness/ Achievement
Father with			
only son (50)	-.13	.03	-.18
only daughter (40)	-.02	-.24	-.26
Mother with			
only son (41)	.04	-.18	.19
only daughter (55)	.13	-.04	.03
Total (186)	-.03	-.10	-.07

Note: No correlation is significant at .05 level.

TABLE 4

Summary of Multiple Regression of the Influence of Parenting Style and Other Variables on Children's Achievement

Variables	Parameter Estimate(b)	Standardized Estimate(β)	Squared Semipartial(sr^2)
Parent Gender	-0.87	- .05	.00
Child Gender	-1.98	- .12	.01
Parent Education	-1.10	- .06	.00
School Selection	11.14**	.43	.18
Homework by Parent	-4.16*	- .25	.06
Authoritativeness	-1.32	- .06	.00
Authoritarianism	-1.26	- .08	.01
Permissiveness	-1.97	- .09	.01
Intercept	98.01		

$R = .52$
$R^2 = .27$
Adjusted $R^2 = .24$

* $p < .001$; ** $p < .0001$.

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